

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of the subject application is respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Following the amendments, claims 17-36 are pending and under examination, with claims 18, 19, 24 and 26 being in independent format.

Claims 15 and 16 have been cancelled, and claims 18, 19, 24 and 26 have been amended to be in independent format. Claims 18, 24 and 26 have additionally been amended to clarify the claim language. Claims 17, 22, 23 and 28-31 have been amended to replace reference to cancelled claims 15 and 16 with reference to claim 18, and claim 20 has been amended to correct a minor typographical error. Claims 32-36 have been added. These claims, which all depend from claim 19, mirror language recited in claims 22, 23 and 28-30.

It is urged that support for all the above amendments may be found throughout the specification and claims as originally filed, and that none of the amendments constitute new matter. Applicants specifically reserve the right to pursue claims to subject matter cancelled from the present claims by the above amendments in one or more related patent applications.

Claim Rejections under 35 USC §112, second paragraph

Claims 15-31 stand rejected under 35 USC §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Specifically, the Examiner objected to the term “may” in claims 15 and 26, and to the phrases “lateral guiding” and “lateral backing-away” in claim 18 and “lateral ends” in claim 24. Following the above amendments, none of these terms appear in the pending claims.

It is urged that one of skill in the art, on being provided with the instant specification, would clearly be able to determine the metes and bounds of the amended claims, and that the rejection of the claims under 35 USC §112, second paragraph, can thus be properly withdrawn.

Claim Rejections under 35 USC §102(b)

Claims 15, 16, 23 and 28 stand rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by US Patent 6,932,778 to Hirt and/or US Patent 6,290,660 to Epps et al. While applicant does not acquiesce in this rejection, in order to expedite allowance of the application claims 15 and 16 have been cancelled from the application and claims 23 and 28 have been amended to depend from claim 18.

It is urged that neither Hirt nor Epps et al. teach or suggest the presently claimed subject matter and that the rejection of claims 15, 16, 23 and 28 under 35 USC §102(b) can be properly withdrawn.

Claim Rejections under 35 USC §103

Claims 17, 22 and 29-31 stand rejected as being unpatentable over Epps et al. and/or Hirt. As noted above, these claims have been amended to depend from 18.

It is submitted that neither of the cited references teach or suggest the subject matter of amended claims 17, 22 and 29-31, and that the rejection of these claims can thus be properly withdrawn.

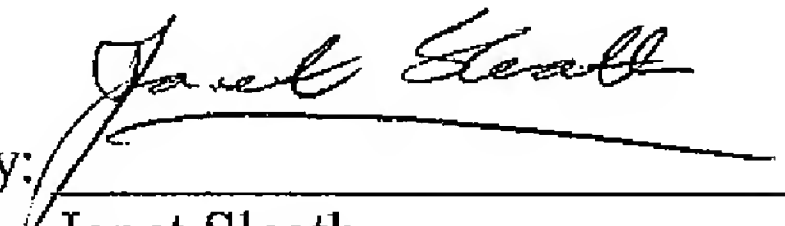
Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner indicated that claims 18-21 and 24-27 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejections under 35 USC §112, second paragraph, and to include all the limitations of the base claims and any intervening claims. This has been done.

Concluding Remarks

Every effort has been made to put the application in condition for allowance. Early reconsideration and allowance of the amended claims is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner have any further questions or concerns regarding the application, he is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned at (206)382.1191.

Respectfully submitted,

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